

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (cancelled)

Claim 2 (currently amended) ~~The water-based ink according to claim 1;~~ A water-based ink comprising a colorant, water, a water-soluble organic solvent, a surfactant, and a chelating agent, wherein said colorant is a dispersion in which a pigment has been made to be dispersible in water by being enveloped in a polymer or has been dispersed without a dispersant, and said chelating agent is nitrilotriacetic acid or a salt thereof.

Claim 3 (original) The water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein said pigment is an organic pigment or an inorganic pigment.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein the amount ~~added~~ of the nitrilotriacetic acid or salt thereof is 0.001 to 0.1 wt%.

Claim 5 (original) The water-based ink according to claim 2, further containing polymer fine particles.

Claim 6 (currently amended) ~~The water-based ink according to claim 1;~~ A water-based ink comprising a colorant, water, a water-soluble organic solvent, a surfactant, and a chelating agent, wherein said chelating agent is methylglycine diacetic acid (MGDA) or a salt thereof,

L-glutamine diacetic acid (GLDA) or a salt thereof, L-aspartic acid diacetic acid (ASDA) or a salt thereof, hydroxyethyliminodiacetic acid (HIDA) or a salt thereof, 1,3-diamino-2-hydroxypropane tetraacetic acid (DPTA-OH) or a salt thereof, hydroxyethylidene diphosphonic acid (HEDP) or a salt thereof, nitrilotrimethylene phosphonic acid (NTMP) or a salt thereof, or phosphonobutane tricarboxylic acid (PBTC) or a salt thereof, wherein the amount added of the methylglycine diacetic acid (MGDA) or salt thereof, L-glutamine diacetic acid (GLDA) or salt thereof, L-aspartic acid diacetic acid (ASDA) or salt thereof, diethylenetriamine pentaacetic acid (DTPA) or salt thereof, hydroxyethyliminodiacetic acid (HIDA) or salt thereof, 1,3-diamino-2-hydroxypropane tetraacetic acid (DPTA-OH) or salt thereof, hydroxyethylidene diphosphonic acid (HEDP) or salt thereof, nitrilotrimethylene phosphonic acid (NTMP) or salt thereof, or phosphonobutane tricarboxylic acid (PBTC) or salt thereof is 0.001 to 0.1 wt%, and wherein said colorant is a dye, or a dispersion in which a pigment has been made to be dispersible in water by being enveloped in a polymer or has been dispersed without a dispersant.

Claim 7 (currently amended) ~~The water-based ink according to claim 6;~~ A water-based ink comprising a colorant, water, a water-soluble organic solvent, a surfactant, and a chelating agent, wherein said chelating agent is gluconic acid (GA) or a salt thereof, or citric acid (CA) or salt thereof, wherein the amount added of the gluconic acid (GA) or salt thereof, or citric acid (CA) or salt thereof is 0.001 to 0.5 wt%, and wherein said colorant is a dye, or a dispersion in which a pigment has been made to be dispersible in water by being enveloped in a polymer or has been dispersed without a dispersant.

Claim 8 (currently amended) ~~The water-based ink according to claim 6,~~ A water-based ink comprising a colorant, water, a water-soluble organic solvent, a surfactant, and a chelating agent, wherein said chelating agent is nitrilotripropionic acid (NTP) or a salt thereof, or nitrilotrisphosphonic acid (NTPO) or a salt thereof, wherein the amount ~~added~~ of the nitrilotripropionic acid (NTP) or salt thereof, or the nitrilotrisphosphonic acid (NTPO) or salt thereof, or dihydroxyethylglycine (DHEG) or salt thereof is 0.001 to 0.2 wt%, and wherein said colorant is a dye, or a dispersion in which a pigment has been made to be dispersible in water by being enveloped in a polymer or has been dispersed without a dispersant.

Claim 9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended) The water-based ink according to claim ~~6~~ 9, containing said dispersion, and further containing polymer fine particles.

Claim 11 (previously presented) The water-based ink according to claim 5, wherein the absolute value of the zeta potential in a state in which said dispersion and said polymer fine particles have been mixed together is at least 30 mV.

Claim 12 (previously presented) The water-based ink according to claim 5, wherein the absolute value of the zeta potential of each of said dispersion and said polymer fine particles independently is at least 30 mV, and the absolute value of the difference between the zeta potential of said dispersion and the zeta potential of said polymer fine particles is not more than

10 mV.

Claim 13 (previously presented) The water-based ink according to claim 5, wherein the polarity of ions of said polymer fine particles is the same as that of said dispersion.

Claim 14 (previously presented) The water-based ink according to claim 5, wherein the particle diameter of said polymer fine particles is 10 to 500 nm, and the amount added of said polymer fine particles is 0.1 to 20 wt%.

Claim 15 (previously presented) The water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein said polymer in said dispersion that constitutes said colorant is at least one selected from the group consisting of polyacrylic acid esters, styrene-acrylic acid copolymers, polystyrenes, polyesters, polyamides, polyimides, silicon-containing polymers, and sulfur-containing polymers.

Claim 16 (currently amended) The water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein said surfactant is at least one substance selected from the group consisting of acetylenic alcohol type surfactants, acetylenic glycol type surfactants, and silicone type surfactants.

Claim 17 (original) The water-based ink according to claim 16, wherein the amount added of the at least one substance selected from the group consisting of acetylenic alcohol type surfactants, acetylenic glycol type surfactants, and silicone type surfactants is 0.1 wt% to 5 wt%.

Claim 18 (currently amended) The water-based ink according to claim 2 ~~1~~, wherein said water-soluble organic solvent is at least one selected from the group consisting of alkylene glycol monoalkyl ethers and 1,2-alkylene glycols.

Claim 19 (original) The water-based ink according to claim 18, wherein in each of said alkylene glycol monoalkyl ethers, the alkylene glycol group has not more than 10 repeat units, and the alkyl group has 4 to 10 carbon atoms.

Claim 20 (original) The water-based ink according to claim 19, wherein said alkylene glycol monoalkyl ethers are at least one selected from the group consisting of diethylene glycol monobutyl ether, triethylene glycol monobutyl ether, propylene glycol monobutyl ether, and dipropylene glycol monobutyl ether.

Claim 21 (original) The water-based ink according to claim 18, wherein each of said 1,2-alkylene glycols is an optionally branched alkylene glycol having 4 to 10 carbon atoms.

Claim 22 (previously presented) The water-based ink according to claim 20, wherein the ink contains at least one substance selected from the group consisting of diethylene glycol monobutyl ether, triethylene glycol monobutyl ether, propylene glycol monobutyl ether, dipropylene glycol monobutyl ether, and 1,2-alkylene glycols, and the amount added of said at least one substance is 0.5 to 30 wt%.

Claim 23 (previously presented) The water-based ink according to claim 16, containing at least one substance selected from the group consisting of acetylenic glycol type surfactants, acetylenic alcohol type surfactants, and silicone type surfactants, and at least one substance selected from the group consisting of diethylene glycol monobutyl ether, triethylene glycol monobutyl ether, propylene glycol monobutyl ether, dipropylene glycol monobutyl ether, and 1,2-alkylene glycols.